

Checklist For Family Friendly Events

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Calendar & Time

- Give families at least six weeks notice and schedule the event on a week-night rather than a week-end.
- Advertise your event at least 4 ways: School Calendar, Bulletin Board News, Take-Home flyers, Email, Phone Calls, Announcements, etc.
- Sixty - Ninety minutes is a suggested time length for the activities. Going too long can be detrimental for future event attendance. If a full meal is served consider a maximum 2 hour time length.

First & Lasting Impressions

- Parking: Ample parking good lighting and easy access to the events. Parking lot attendants if needed.
- Well lit walk ways to enter the facility with signs that point the way.
- Hospitality Team stationed to help guide people and answer questions before, during and after the event. Choose a team of people who are friendly, smile easily, and who are comfortable introducing parents to each other and to staff. This team should be made up of persons who respect all people groups and who are sensitive and polite to people of differing cultures. Parents should receive a "Thank you for coming" as parting words at the end of the event.
- Signs: Visible & well placed to welcome and direct families to the meeting room/s and the restrooms.
- Clean & uncluttered: Entry, restrooms, meeting rooms.
- Welcome Packets for parents who are new to your school.

Special Needs/Considerations

- Transportation
- Handicap access
- Language/Translation
- Single parent families
- Extended family members
- Dietary restrictions
- Childcare with qualified workers

Easy Access: Seating, Seeing, Hearing

- Wide aisles, short rows, designated handicap locations.
- Stage or elevated area for MC, performers, speakers.
- Powerpoint or other audio/visual should be viewable from all seats - test it out and remember that people can't see through someone else's head.
- Microphone with amps or speakers. Test them and have a skilled operator on duty.

What's next? Is there an agenda?

- Large Wall Chart: Event schedule/activities.
- Flyers: Brief intro and simple outline of instructions.
- Verbal Information: Brief & to the point, tested to ensure that confusion is avoided.

Start with an "Ice-Breaker"

- Sing-A-Long Folk Songs
- Brief funny skit
- Humorous story about the school/students/staff
- Ice-Breaker game - get parents and families interacting.
- Family Activities while waiting for the program to begin:
 - Word Searches
 - World Map Activities
 - World Almanac Activities
 - Technology Activities

Avoid long lines and bottle-necks!

- Consider the flow of events with a room full of people.
- Give easy access to activities and supplies. Pre-package or organize supplies per/person or per/table if possible.
- Shorten food service lines by providing access on both sides of the buffet table.
- Set up two or more identical food service areas.
- Provide a separate beverage table so that beverages don't hold up the food line.
- Pre-wrap utensils w/napkins.

Provide "Getting Involved"

Opportunities

- Announcements and hand-outs about future events.
- Future event coordinators available to answer questions and supply information.
- A Sign-Up Table for parents to volunteer for future events.